



HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

City of Burlington

200 Church Street, Suite 102, Burlington, VT 05401

Voice (802) 540-2505

Fax (802) 864-1777

Minutes

Human Resources Policy Committee

October 29th, 2021

HR Conference Room, 200 Church Street, Suite 102,
8:30am – 10:30am

Present: Councilor Sarah Carpenter (SC), Councilor Joan Shannon (JS), AFSCME Vice President Damion Gilbert, DPW Director, Chapin Spencer (CS), Megan Moir (MM), Lee Perry (LP), HR Talent, Development & Diversity Manager, Vanessa Santos Eugenio (VSE), HR Manager, Lynn Reagan (LR), Nathan Lavery (NL), HR Director, Kerin Durfee (KD), HR Coordinator, Jessie Anderson.

Meeting called to order by SC at 8:30am

1. Agenda

SC opened meeting and moved to approve agenda; JS seconded.

2. Approval of Minutes from 9/10

SC moved to postpone minute's approval to next committee meeting; JS seconded.

3. Public forum

No members of the public present for comments.

4. Role of the HR Committee

SC asked KD to share about the role of the HR Committee and the official duties of the Councilors on the committee.

KD responded saying that the Human Resources Department is looking to join forces with councilors to elevate things that the City need support with. Recruitment, policy changes, and grievances will be brought forth to the committee.

SC and KD introduced members for the DPW department, CS, MM, LP, and NL.

JS shared that the role of councilors is not to micro manage HR but rather work together with the HR department to offer guidance and work to meet employee needs.

5. City Recruitment

SC asked KD to give the committee an update on current efforts in regards to recruitment. KD introduced VSE as a recruitment professional for the City and asked her to share current recruitment efforts with the team.

KD talk about the compensation systems within the City and mentioned that postings within the City is not keeping up with the job market wages. KD also mentioned that this is having a direct impact on the HR department as HR managers are spending a lot of time on position reclassifications. KD mentioned that she will address this by working with the Chief of Administration, Katherine Schad to address recruitment concerns.

KD stated that this is where management and the unions agree that we need to do more about recruitment and keeping up with the job market.

KD asked VSE to add to the discussion about recruitment in the City.

VSE seconded what KD shared and mentioned that unemployment is high in the State of Vermont currently and how the “benefits cliff” affect filling positions because applicants may not be able to afford losing state benefits through unemployment.

VSE also mentioned that the City has a comprehensive list of local partners that we share positions with but there is always room to grow and expand so departments should feel free to share recruitment ideas.

KD asked LR to start the discussion around recruitment at DPW and she introduced MM, CS, and LP to the committee.

LR explained that recruitment has been a challenge and postings needing to be extended because the applicant pool is small or seeing no applicants at all. LR mentioned that MM will go over the recruitment summary for DPW.

LR revealed that the goal is to be fully staffed before winter months for the emergencies that come with the winter but the department is currently under staffed in the water division.

LP added that this need is also prominent in the maintenance division within DPW.

LR included that when we do get applicants, they come in at an entry level and need to be placed in the training program.

KD asked LR and the DPW team about how we can move forward?

CS mentioned that DPW is in a remarkable situation and will be looking forward to working with the HR committee to find innovative ways to make positions competitive in the job market.

CS said that there have been honest and significant communication with the AFSCME union to find ways to address these recruitment issues.

MM added that the water division is down a crew and this puts a lot of stress on employees and can sometimes lead to resignations.

MM recommend that we need to be more radical with recruitment efforts and get the human infrastructure of the City in order if we want the City to be successful by putting resources into employees and attracting employees.

MM listed ways in which we can do this by looking at systematic ways of recruitment and job grading systems within the City.

SC seconded what MM shared and asked how the committee can work on such issues and prioritize the needs of City departments?

KD said that there are different ways to do this. The HR department cannot continue to do reclassifications when efforts should be geared towards job fairs and other ways to actively recruit within different communities.

SC asked councilor JS to share her input.

JS asked about job fairs and what it takes to make that happen?

KD mention that we need to be flexible about job fairs and recruitment because the job market and meeting what applicants need can be challenging sometimes. She also mentioned that the unions are on board with efforts.

CS added that we will need more than on strategy to address recruitment challenges in the City. There are meetings scheduled with the AFSCME union currently to present proposals and come up with recruitment solutions.

KD added that a proposal will be helpful. MM mentioned we should acknowledge that recruitment takes time in a municipal and flexibility can be challenging but it is vital for success.

SC asked how processes could be accelerated.

KD mentioned that we have to come together with the unions before moving forward to the City council with recruitment efforts and attracting applicants.

KD mentioned that the city needs a compensation study and market factoring of positions.

SC added that we should look at the compensation study process and come up with a proposal.

JS mentioned that the HR committee can support the HR department by getting behind a plan but also mentioned that we should look at union factors.

CS added that there will be long term and short term efforts but we need to address this soon; SC agreed.

KD thanked the committee for listening to recruitment needs and DPW for their efforts around recruitment. KD mentioned that recruitment should be a standing agenda item; SC seconded.

6. Adjournment

SC mentioned meeting planned for November and possibly setting a time for December.

SC adjourned the meeting.

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